

AT WORD LEVEL

A. Word Form

Words in a sentence must be in the correct form. Errors in **word form** may include wrong choices with respect to singular or plural, part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb), pronoun form (male or female), or verb form.

Examples

Wrong (verb form): Chung **walking** very quickly along the street.

Correct: Chung **was walking** very quickly along the street.

Wrong (adverb form): Chung was walking very **quick** along the street.

Correct: Chung was walking very **quickly** along the street.

Exercise 5.1: Recognizing Word Form Errors

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Ex. 5.1,
5.2

Each of these sentences has one or two word form errors. Correct the errors. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. The inventions~~x~~ of tool use was a huge step in human development. [*inventions* should be singular to agree with the singular verb *was*.]
2. Progress in agricultural are essential for all societies.
3. The industrial revolution was based on learning how to harnesssed the power of machinery.
4. They were speaking so loudly that I could not concentration.
5. The impact of writer systems was profound because it allowed humans to communicate easy across great distances of time and space.
6. Oral history is part of many culture, but written history is said to be the foundation of civilize.

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7. Some experts claiming that computer technology, as compared to all other inventions, has had the great influence on world history.
 8. Electronic calculators have enable modern commerce to progress in unexpected ways.
 9. The astonishingly advances in modern telecommunications will enable a new revolutionary to occur.
 10. Technology today allows us to communicate instantaneous.
 11. The most important question is whether humans can learn to using technology for peaceful purposes.
 12. Inventions that we have not yet even dream of will be part of the normal life of future generation.
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B. Articles

Terms to know

Indefinite article: *a* (or *an* if the noun begins with a vowel sound)

Definite article: *the*

Count (countable) noun: A noun that can be made plural or counted (*book, books, three books*).

Non-count (uncountable) noun: Nouns that usually cannot be counted or made plural (*furniture, flour, weather*).

Zero article: This refers to use of a noun with no article before it, as in *Snow is white*.

To decide which article to use, determine what type of noun is being described.

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Count and Non-Count Nouns

- Use **a** or **an** with a singular count noun (never with a non-count or plural noun).

Examples

Give me **a** pen.
(referring to an unspecified pen)

An elephant damaged this tree.
(referring to an unspecified elephant)

- Use **a** or **an** if someone (or something) is one in a group of many.

Example

I discussed it with Dr. Martin, **a** professor in the Philosophy Department.

▶ ▶ ▶ Usage Note

Many nouns can be non-count or count **depending on the context**. In these cases, the meaning of the noun may be different according to whether it is non-count or count.

Nouns with General Reference

- Use **no article and the singular form** of the noun to refer to a general type of something.

Examples

I went there by **bus**.

Time flies when you're having fun.
(general idea of time)

- Use **no article and the plural form** of the noun when you mean all things or persons referred to by that noun.

Examples

Students often come here to see me.
(refers to all types of students)

I've been to that restaurant many **times**.
(a specific number of different times)

- Use **a** or **an** or **the** for the general meaning of all types, species, or items referred to by the noun, especially to a species or type of something (a more formal usage).

Examples

A lion is an interesting animal.

The lion is an interesting animal.

Nouns with Definite Reference

- Use **the** with count or non-count nouns, in singular or plural, when the reader (or listener) knows what definite or specific thing is being referred to by the noun. Often an *of* phrase or *that* clause is used to make something specific.

▶ ▶ ▶ Usage Note

Some adjectives can also make a noun unique and definite.

Examples

Give me **the** pen.

(referring to a specific pen that the reader/listener knows)

The development of this system is recent.

The information that he gave me was wrong.

The medicines in my cabinet are effective.

Examples

Give it to **the first person** to arrive.

The only way to do the job is to work hard.

Talk to **the next customer**.

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- Use **the** with many specific geographical features or regions when there is an adjectival form in the name.

Examples

It sank in **the Allegheny River**.

We went to **the Rocky Mountains**.

My sister vacationed in **the Hawaiian Islands**.

- Use **the** when the noun is something specific because it is unique.

Examples

The earth revolves around **the sun**, and **the moon** revolves around **the earth**.

I left my coffee cup in **the kitchen**.

(when there is one kitchen in the house)

- Use **the** when you want to point out a particular group and exclude other groups.

Example

The bus drivers in this city are very friendly.
(specific contrast with other groups)

Nouns Using Zero (No) Article

- Use **no article** before the noun with non-specific, non-count nouns, plural count nouns, and names or titles (such as movies, people, or books).

Examples

There was **evidence** to prove it.
(non-specific, non-count noun)

I need **money**.
(non-specific, non-count noun)

I don't like **raisins**.
(plural count noun)

Take the patient to **Wilkins Hospital**.
(name of a hospital)

Great Expectations is a great novel.
(title of a book)

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Ex. 5.3,
5.4, 5.5,
5.6

Exercise 5.2: Using Articles

Fill in the blanks with **a/an**, **the**, or **0** for zero article. Some items may have more than one possible answer.

1. She would like to borrow ____ pencil on the desk.
2. ____ student sitting in ____ corner has an extra pencil.
3. Would you like ____ coffee or ____ tea?
4. He took ____ only maps that were left.
5. Our director announced, “ ____ play has been cancelled.”
6. She went to ____ Heinz Hall to listen to the symphony last night.
7. I bought ____ rice, ____ broccoli, and ____ pan at the store.
8. My daughter is learning to play ____ violin at school.
9. That restaurant is on ____ Fifth Avenue.
10. Seoul is ____ capital of Korea.
11. ____ President Costa defeated all his ____ opponents in the election.
12. I had an appointment with Ms. Aldali, ____ accountant who works for ____ Baker, Zelig, and Sons, Ltd.
13. Marie ate some of ____ candy that I gave her.
14. ____ human being is a mammal.

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C. Prepositions

Prepositions are best learned in context because they can vary in meaning, depending on which other words they are used with. They are often idiomatic, and, in many cases, they do not have translation equivalents in other languages. The most common prepositions in English are *at*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *to*, and *with*. However, there are many others. Give special attention to their use in what you read and hear, and try to give them repeated attention in order to gradually learn their usage.

Note these important points:

- Prepositions usually indicate relationships of **time, place, movement, and logical connections between ideas**. Prepositions connect a noun (or pronoun or noun phrase) with another word, usually a noun, verb, or adjective.
- A preposition has a **noun (or noun phrase, pronoun, or gerund) as its object**. Use the object form of pronouns after prepositions. A verb that follows a preposition as object must be in the gerund form (*V + -ing*), its noun form.
- There are many **verb + preposition** combinations—**phrasal verbs**—in which the preposition does not have its usual meaning and the meaning of the phrasal verb is not clear from its parts. Phrasal verbs must be learned as whole phrases.

Examples

I think you should arrive **before** 12:30 PM. (time)

Lionel will stay **in** the house. (place)

Walk **along** the street. (movement)

After some time, I **gave up**. (phrasal verb)

Bill walked **around her**. (object form following preposition)

She tried to **talk** me **into going** to see the movie. (phrasal verb + gerund)

After speaking, Ahmed left the room. (gerund following preposition)

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Ex. 5.7,
5.8, 5.9,
5.10

Exercise 5.3: Using Appropriate Prepositions

Insert the correct preposition in each gap in the paragraph.

① _____ my opinion the most important and useful everyday device
② _____ present is a computer. There are several reasons why I would
suggest buying a computer first when you would like to furnish your
apartment ③ _____ technical devices. Modern computers have enough
multimedia and computational capabilities to perform all functions that
such devices ④ _____ televisions, audio players, and video equipment
can. In relation ⑤ _____ computer games, a computer can become the
entertainment center ⑥ _____ your world. The internet as a source
⑦ _____ most news information, e-business, e-shopping opportunities,
email, and videoconference communication is an advantage you can
obtain only ⑧ _____ means ⑨ _____ a home computer. Finally a great
deal ⑩ _____ hiring ⑪ _____ modern jobs is done ⑫ _____ using
computers. Having a computer ⑬ _____ home helps you to get the
necessary practice if you are a novice. If you are an experienced user,
all these arguments are redundant because you know the reasons! I
am sure you will agree ⑭ _____ me.

D. Word Choice in Formal Writing Style

It is important when writing in a formal, academic style to choose words that are very specific in meaning. This will give the reader an exact idea of what is being expressed. Vague or general words such as *thing* or *get* should be avoided. Be careful when choosing alternates because some words that are similar do not always have the same meaning or connotation when used in different contexts. For instance, *proficient* and *beneficial* can both substitute for *good*, but they have different meanings and must be used accordingly. A **thesaurus** (reference list or book of synonyms) can be very helpful in finding alternates, but use a dictionary as well to help you select the most appropriate words.

Words that are usually too general or too informal, followed by examples of alternate words that might be used instead:

- give* → donate, provide, offer
- get* → obtain, acquire, achieve
- lots* → much/many, numerous, multiple
- nice* → kind, pleasant, enjoyable
- good* → proficient, beneficial, decent
- let* → allow, enable, permit
- thing* → element, factor, entity
- people* → individuals, citizens, inhabitants
- make* → compose, formulate, create

Common **phrasal verbs** that are too informal for academic texts, followed by examples of alternate words that might be used instead:

- talk about* → discuss
- go into* → enter
- cut back* → reduce
- drop by* → visit
- ask for* → request

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Ex. 5.11

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Exercise 5.4: Using More Specific Words
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Replace the underlined words with words that are more specific.

1. I am planning to get a new car this year. _____
2. Eating nutritious food and getting enough exercise are the most important things for a healthy lifestyle. _____
3. From the time she was a child, she has been a good soccer player. _____
4. I believe that Apple should add some new things to the next version of the iPhone. _____

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Exercise 5.5: Using More Formal Words
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Replace the underlined words with words that are more formal.

1. For her research, she will look at the effects of carbon monoxide emissions on the environment. _____
2. In order to get a driver's license, you have to take a computerized test and a driving exam. _____
3. The third chapter of the book talks about the role of stereotypes in speech processing. _____
4. Mrs. Romero was a great person; she always gave money to charities and helped individuals financially whenever she could. _____